

- The MONTH with the EDITOR -

Notes, reflections, comment upon medical and health news in both the scientific and public press, briefs of sorts from here, there and everywhere.

Doctors who have the interests of their profession at heart will find in Rexwald Brown's article on page 465 of this issue a clear exposition of a problem the correct solution of which is of primary importance to the future of our profession and to the welfare of society.

They say that in these states (Florida, North Carolina, Louisiana, and Texas) people who never before heard of evolution are inquiring into it, finding it interesting. Boys, denied the forbidden subject at school, furtively read about evolution from booklegged treatises, down behind the barn, where their fathers once read "Pluck and Luck," "Fred Farnot," and "Diamond Dick," the while smoking cigarettes concocted of cornsilk.

To forbid is to recommend. These state legislatures are doing a great work for evolution.—Scientific American, September, 1926.

Letters of candidates for offices, which form a large part of a doctor's mail these days, make varied and sundry announcements and claims; some humorous, some pathetic, and some just plain Americana. A candidate for the office of coroner in one county includes this in his platform:

"Some people have the mistaken idea that the duties of coroner can be performed only by a doctor. This is not so. The coroner is not allowed by law to personally perform an autopsy, but must employ some doctor for that purpose. The coroner has nothing to do with the burial of the dead except to see that some undertaker does it. He has nothing to do with the determination of the cause of death except to call a coroner's jury for that purpose, and this jury from the testimony of other WITNESSES determines the cause of death. Where a knowledge of medicine is necessary a doctor is called as a WITNESS. And the law does NOT require that a coroner shall be a doctor.

"I do not believe in unnecessary autopsies. If elected to the office of coroner I will respect the feelings of relatives in this regard, and only where the law or justice requires will an autopsy be performed."

Pre-;;:!?.—Pre, according to lexicographers, means "before." To prejudge, according to the same accepted authorities, is "to judge before full and sufficient examination."

Diagnosis, like other judgments, should be based on evidence and with all facts before us. What, Oh Lord, is preclinical diagnosis? Like a lot of other pre's, it is promoted to euchre the physician out of some more of his responsibilities and patients and assign them to another class of "specialists" who are not governed by the laws of the land.

Pre, in its many ramifications, is something well worth thinking about. This perfectly good prefix has been promoted for selfish purposes until we now see huge signs about pre pre this, that and the other thing.

. And some doctors fall for it!!

Picture, if you can, a country doctor in the year 1809 traveling sixty miles on horseback on a winter's day to see a patient whose strength was being sapped by the ravages of a pelvic tumor. The results of this visit are memorable alike for their far-reaching effect, as for the audacity of a surgeon and the courage of a woman. We next see this woman on a bleak day in December, 1809, "with her pendulous abdomen resting on the pommel of her saddle" riding those same sixty miles, a two or three days' journey, into Danville, Kentucky, there to submit

to the momentous experiment that was to supply the foundation for modern abdominal surgery. The central figures in these two pictures are Ephriam McDowell, the fearless surgeon, and Jane Todd Crawford, the heroic woman. Their story is indeed worthy of the pen of the novelist.—John B. Deaver, J. Iowa M. Soc., August, 1926.

Progressive medicine and the world has lost a great leader, and thousands of physicians a helpful friend, in the passing of John G. Adami on August 29, age 64. Doctor Adami at the time of his death was vice-chancellor of Liverpool University.

Our cities will secure clean milk instead of cleaned milk just as fast as they learn what the problem really is. Physicians and health officials working with farsighted milk dealers can bring good milk to the attention of any city in short order. May the motto "Clean Milk, Not Cleaned Milk" guide more health departments in their future undertakings.—Illinois M. J., August, 1926.

The states should not be induced by coercion or by favor to surrender the management of their own affairs. The federal government ought to resist the tendency to be loaded up with duties which the states should perform. It does not follow that because something ought to be done the national government ought to do it.—President Coolidge.

One person out of every nineteen "gainfully employed" in this country draws his salary from public coffers.

There are between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 persons on federal, state, and municipal payrolls.

Each American family contributes an average of \$123 a year from its income for the support of these jobholders.—Dearborn Independent, September 11, 1926.

Physicians interested in carbon monoxide poisoning will find an unusually complete review of the literature and some discussion of the subject in the Bulletin New York Academy of Medicine, August, 1926.

Some reader sends us the following clipping with the suggestion that doctors will enjoy it: A machine broke down. The operator, the foreman, and the plant engineer could not start it.

The expert took one quick look at the machine, tapped it several times with a hammer and told the operator to start it.

His bill was for \$250. When the superintendent asked for an itemized statement he got this:

Tapping with a hammer.....	\$ 1.00
Knowing where to tap.....	249.00
Total	\$250.00

"Radio Consultation," headlines over a story about some doctor being called from New York to London to "save the life" of a moving picture "magnate."

Some "consultants" are like that; they want to do all the talking and they want the world to hear them.

In spite of the fact that scientific medical bodies endorse vaccination to prevent smallpox, how many physicians advise their clientele to have the babies vaccinated when they are six months of age? Most of them wait

until the mother brings the child to the doctor stating that the school will not admit the child unless vaccinated. Furthermore, despite the fact that toxin-antitoxin is recognized as a preventive of diphtheria, how many physicians urge it in the families which they attend.—Health News, New York.

Facts about health are distributed to the public at large by the million. The dissemination of these facts is undoubtedly advantageous. Will an increased volume of health intelligence for the public at large ultimately enable the average individual thus exposed to make sound health judgments, Will we, by expanding our facilities in this quantitative way, ultimately furnish the basis for a practically universal sound value judgment as to what constitutes authentic information, and a reliable source of advice? Will something in addition have to be done to establish a confidence in scientific procedure, a reliance upon expert guidance, with the elimination of the existing popular antipathy to the expert in any field?—Boston M. and S. J., August 12, 1926.

In an address before the Royal Institute of Public Health, on the nature of malignancy, George Adami (Med. Jour. and Record, August 18, 1926), delivered one of his usual carefully prepared messages which should be seriously studied by every physician.

There is so much so-called scientific twaddle being fed to doctors and the public these days that it is only occasional clean-cut logical analyses like that of Chancellor Adami that keeps us safe from the position of John Byrom, whom the distinguished pathologist credits with: "Big fleas have little fleas upon their backs to bite 'em, And little fleas still lesser fleas, and so *ad infinitum*."

As may well be imagined, the work of this bureau (A. M. A., Bureau of Investigation) has met with bitter opposition. At one time suits for libel totaling almost thirteen million dollars were filed against the association for its courage in bringing to light the schemes of unprincipled promoters. Only one of these suits ever came to trial; the court damages amounted to but one cent, and the plaintiff paid his own costs. Even today two suits for one hundred thousand dollars each await action by the courts: one the case of a remedy promoted as a cure for cancer, the other a device issued with extravagant claims to persons who are deaf.—Morris Fishbein, The Century Magazine, August, 1926.

"The Chiro-Vox absolutely proves that there may be an apparent displacement without an impingement and that there may be a severe pressure that is doing untold harm, without any apparent displacement, even when such displacement cannot be detected either with the x-ray or by local palpitation."

This is one paragraph in the display advertising of a chiropractor in a metropolitan newspaper. The ad is headed "Listening in on Nerves," and the advertiser admits that it "may read like a fairly tale." It does.

I think the time has come when we ought to educate the people to consult well-trained men—and please get this statement right—I think the time has come when we ought to educate the people to consult well-trained men rather than to try to teach these people how to diagnose angina pectoris.—C. W. Waggoner, Ohio State M. J., September, 1926.

Newspapers round the world carried extracts from the Prince of Wales' postprandial address at the annual dinner of the British National Association for the Prevention of Tuberculosis held recently. An excellent message it was too, but the speaker had bad advice when he said that tuberculosis was a penalty of civilization and that it was hardly known among savage men and wild animals. This is not a fact, and the statement was the "news feature" of the address.

A valuable point was made in the epigrammatic state-

ment, "If (tuberculosis) preventable, why not prevented?" and again, "What has been introduced may be removed."

Such men (pioneers) fight the campaigns of the future over and over again in their thoughts while all the world around them is at peace; and when the time comes at last, though they themselves be gone, the roads they planned are broad and straight for the march of other feet; the sword they forged lies ready for another hand; the spirit they called up still lives, and they themselves, in their graves, in their well-earned rest, have a share in the victories which humanize mankind.—C. W. Waggoner, Ohio State M. J., September, 1926.

"Time," the attractive little news weekly with a big circulation, devotes three columns of its limited space (September 13) to lightly chiding physicians for their alleged timidity in helping the newspapers educate the public in medical matters, and in particular because they refuse to enter into newspaper debates with faddists and doctors with axes to grind.

"Time's" statement that "newspapers tend to print every scrap of medical information they can get" will make the initiated smile. Millions of words of medical information are published monthly in hundreds of legitimate magazines and reports. The American Medical Association publishes a popular health magazine and issues a clip sheet of interesting and attractive medical information to hundreds of newspapers, only a comparatively few of which pay any attention to this reliable information. Too many of them, and apparently "Time" also, consider a statement of Arbuthnot Lane on a controversial subject medical information for the public, and they promote Lane further by eulogy and the publication of his picture.

"Time" also apparently considers as medical news the statement of Charles Mayo (given under what purports to be his picture) that Valentino died of septicemia. The bulletins issued by Valentino's physicians apparently were not news.

There is more of the same sort of "news" cleverly designed to discredit the conduct and by implication the motives of physicians because they refuse to enter newspaper controversies about health.

All the useful information any newspaper or "Time" wants may be obtained regularly if they will only ask the American Medical and other medical organizations.

Sir James Barrie, speaking the other day at a banquet for the Australian cricketers in England, spoke whimsically of one of those who, having set out upon the long journey of the dead, paused to lean his elbows on the village gate and watch the cricket match on the green. "What a terrible thing if he had to rejoin his fellows feeling that we, his successors, were not playing the game." Try as we will, we may not evade the responsibility we owe to those who have passed along this way ahead of us.—T. Wingate Todd, Science, September 3, 1926.

Thirty-one per cent of all hospital treatment in the United States in 1923 was given free and 19.3 per cent was only partly paid for.—Bull. of the Wayne County Med. Soc., September, 1926.

On account of changed standards of living in Germany, about 85 per cent of the sick take advantage of their privileges as members of city and state clinics, for their services in which doctors are paid either a low salary or a minimum fee amounting to about 20 cents per patient.

The increase in the number of doctors is accounted for by the advantages offered during the war to those wishing to take a course of instruction. Doctors are collected thickest in Berlin, where there is one for each hundred persons.—New York Times.

There is almost daily evidence that physical therapy is rapidly "living down its past" reputation and finding its place among the reputable therapeutic measures.—Internat. Med. Digest, August, 1926.